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ABSTRACT

Professional organizations in the world of work view counselors as human resource development professionals with historic and defined roles. The issue of new and emerging roles for counselors is the result of the need for a shift from counseling only for vocational placement to a concern for the intangibles resulting from the interaction between organizational change and evolving worker needs. It has been suggested that professional issues associated with this change will be focused around aspects of the economic and occupational environments with which counselors will interact and in which their clients will be emersed. Major departures in education and counseling need to occur to facilitate economic development. Curriculum and counseling need to be distributed over a wider temporal span which extends into post-formal school arenas and later lifetime periods of individuals. The counseling effort should embrace not only specific client needs, but be broad enough to consider organizational, societal, and economic realities. Counselors formally involved in economic development strategies may assume some combination of roles. The counselor will need to acquire additional knowledge and skills to support these new and more complex roles. Meeting these challenges will contribute to individual and national ecomonic development. (ABL)

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COUNSELORS' EMERGING ROLE IN INDIVIDUAL AND CANADIAN ECONOMIC SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses what many economic and business planners believe to be a critical emerging role for counselors. Historically, career counseling and guidance professionals have been frequently described as "switching mechanisms" which brought individuals and opportunities together (Herr & Long, 1983). Today, however, economic and business planners suggest that counseling young and maturing workers should no longer be a "test 'em and tell 'em" process". Rather, decision makers within organizations in the marketplace suggest that there should be a shift in the role of counselors away from filling job orders or placing job seekers in order to meet manpower shortages. Business leaders suggest counselors should actively work with, and within, organizations to help modify work situations to cope with short-term transitional issues, plan for retraining and education to support long-term strategic planning, and address organizational development issues related to work force change.

Historically, the focus of the majority of counselors' efforts has been the individual during his/her vocational formative years. Implicit in the suggested shifts in counselor roles is the notion that individuals, worker groups, and organizations are in a constant state of maturation and evolution. The issues involving workers and organizations, therefore, may be two-fold. First, as organizations change and mature, their expectations of young and emerging workers also change. Second, as organizations evolve and mature, their expectations of the behavior of current worker groups change. These shifts in expected behavior for both emerging workers and existing workers are beset with a plethora of issues: appropriate knowledge and skills, attitudes, values, and other individual and organizational cultural factors.

In discussing a proposed economic development role for counselors, this paper will be influenced by three broad interweaving themes: economics, world of work changes and adjustments, and counselor competencies.

In addition, the concept of worker maturity is used to embrace individuals' or worker groups' readiness or ability to deal with job or occupational requirements. This concept encompasses social, skill and knowledge, political, normative, and affective aspects of world of work preparedness. This includes the workers' knowledge of how organizations change and the skills workers need to survive these changes.

The balance of this paper discusses these specific topics: free trade: one background issue, employment sector issues, counseling for current and future employability, employment and occupational change, personal adjustment to work, and professional issues.

FREE TRADE: ONE BACKGROUND ISSUE

Canada, like many nations in the world, is currently undergoing significant economic change. As an emerging major force in the international economy, Canada needs to look strategically inward at its human resources as never before. Canadian human resources, whether they be emerging young workers, workers already in the work force, or workers displaced from the work force, will play an increasing and critical role in achieving the goals of the Canadian economy.

This could become especially critical in light of recent negotiations to eliminate trade barriers between Canada and the United States. What further complicates this situation is that, in addition to being one of Canada's major trading partners, the United States is a major economic investor in the Canadian economy. Recent figures indicate that controlling ownership of as much as 41% of Canadian production for shipment is held by U.S.-based firms.

One Canadian concern is that, without some form of economic control, the United States may be able to totally dominate and direct the type, quantity, quality, and location of jobs in the Canadian economy. This could be achieved through marketplace

manipulation via selective pricing, distribution, production, and/or promotion strategies. Implicit in this concern are several issues. They include:

1. will the current or emerging Canadian workers' skills be appropriate, applicable, and/or transferable to meet the needs of new occupations, industries, processes, and/or technological applications which may emerge as a result of this trade agreement, and
2. what strategic work force training, retraining, education, and human resource development initiatives need to be planned and implemented to support the redirection of retained or dislocated workers resulting from the trade agreement?

These work force issues are not necessarily confined to any geo-politically, socially, ethnically, and/or economically defined group or area. Therefore, to investigate and respond to the impacts and implications of these issues, it is necessary to understand and apply systematic investigations which consider all aspects and issues associated with each of these groups or areas. The strategies used by human resource development (HRD) professionals and economic planners to complete these investigations should be grounded in methods used for inter-industry economic analysis, needs analysis, strategic planning for education for work and economic development analysis, and/or organizational development strategies.

Professional training organizations consider the roles performed by counseling professionals as among those included in training and development roles and functions. In addition, these organizations view professional counselor activities as appropriate and necessary for successfully addressing these economic and work place issues. Specifically, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) identifies the roles of "Individual Development Counselor" and "Transfer Agent" as two of the fifteen job roles normally encompassed in functions performed by HRD professionals

(Chakiris & Rosander, 1986). Jacobs (1988) suggests that one of the purposes of the counselor's role in a human performance technology system is "to provide a conceptual means to view the people, materials, events, resources, and tools that are required to achieve individual and organizational goals in work settings". HRD professionals also recognize that counselors may have to deal with a new and diverse client population as they become more strategically involved in world of work issues. This variety in clients suggests there may be a need for an increasing number of new and evolving competencies to deal with our "new" clients' issues.

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR ISSUES

Many of our business and industrial inadequacies are said to result from out-moded management techniques that have created dysfunctional organizational cultures. The culture of an organization has a great deal to do with how effectively or efficiently a person is able to do his/her job. Yet, we may not be dealing effectively, if at all, in preparing individuals to cope with the issues they encounter in an organizational culture experiencing change due to economic, social, and political pressures.

The definitions of worker roles in organizations are changing rapidly as organizations adjust to deal with the unfolding panorama of new and non-traditional pressures. Wright (1988) suggests that an organization's cultural issues are manifested in three ways: philosophy, activities, and systems. It is at the activities and systems levels that our clients interact most intensely with the cultural issues of an organization. While these may be formal or informal in nature, the emerging need is for individuals to develop an awareness and the supporting skills which allow them to adjust without incurring intra-personal conflict with their own norms and values.

Some of the activities issues include management leadership styles, formal and informal working relationships, formal and informal rules and regulations, and formal and informal power. Unless the individual worker understands the cultural ramifications of his/her work environment, individual, and ultimately organizational, difficulties will arise. It becomes imperative, therefore, for someone to assume the, not here-to-fore practiced, role in organizations of cross-cultural facilitator and/or educator and skills provider. This is especially true considering the emerging ethnic diversity of the work place. Counselors' professional preparation and experience in dealing with social and culturally diverse clients suggest they could occupy this role successfully.

Business and industry, economic, and educational planners believe that counselor must enter more actively into curriculum development. They believed that counselors' knowledge of changing learner characteristics and needs can facilitate the development of instructional design for relevant education and/or corporate training experiences. Central to this emerging role of counselors in non-traditional institutions is the recognition by organizations of their reliance upon efficiently and effectively trained human resources in order to insure economic survival. Compounding this issue is a general absence of formal preparation of decision makers in industry, business, and government regarding individual career or occupational development issues. Managers tend to lack background or understanding of the theories and underlying research which address the processes by which individuals choose occupations, take occupational risks, and formulate decisions about occupational development and advancement. Thus, organizational leaders suggest there is an emerging need for career guidance and counseling professionals who can be attendant to individuals' and organizations' needs for in-depth and accurate information and understanding about several critical issues associated with the human side of planned economic growth. Among others, these include

potential job performance problems which may occur in the current work groups as a result of implementing economic or business strategic plans. This means understanding personal values and preferences of members of affected occupational work groups regarding retraining to address new or modified skill and knowledge requirements. In addition, it will be important for education planners and career counselors to be able to assess the impact that planned economic and technological changes will have upon career options for young workers preparing to enter the work force.

COUNSELING FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE EMPLOYABILITY

Employers postulate that just learning new skills and knowledge does not guarantee hiring or promotion since many times this learning cannot be, or is not, translated into desired on-the-job performance. This may be due in part to the failure of enterprise to understand its own job skill needs. On the other hand, educational institutions may be guilty of idealizing future jobs in the absence of first-hand knowledge about skill requirements associated with applied emerging or current technologies within the work place. A frequent complaint emerging from this scenario by trainee and employer alike is that often content of training or education programmemes has had little application to actual job demands (Gowan, 1966).

These issues suggest that counselors and human resource development and education professionals need to become collectively involved in manpower and job skill analysis activities. In some organizations, this may result in job redesign--breaking the job into a series of simple, unskilled or semi-skilled tasks--which may make it possible for less-skilled, less-confident individuals to deal with the job successfully. This should not be a terminal strategy but an interim effort while individuals or work groups experience appropriate retraining or education activities.

In other cases, understanding the actual knowledge and skill requirements to perform tasks defined by new jobs allows planners

to assess the need or appropriateness of para-professional roles which can be fulfilled by less mature workers. Such "aide" roles may emerge when job redesign, which is supported by attendant training, creates a situation where current workers need to be freed from below-skills tasks. This approach is not without its negative consequences. Professionals, or advanced-skilled individuals, may be very reluctant to give up elements of their jobs which are easy or at which they are extremely skilled, successful, and/or competent. In addition, the task-losing worker group may be jealous of the successes of the para-professional group while the mature work group struggles to apply new knowledge and master new tasks.

EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE

During our parent's generation, it was common to expect to spend most of one's life doing a single or similar job for one organization. In the late fifties, through the sixties, and into the early seventies, individuals entering the work force could expect to stay in relatively the same occupation but change jobs or organizations several times in a career. Today, young workers can expect to see their occupations evolve significantly into "new" occupations, or they can expect to have to change to related occupations several times in their careers. This occupational evolution is occurring during a period in which we see an increasing percentage of young men and women failing to complete high school. What faces them is a decreasing number of occupations which call for less than a high school education (Bell, 1976; Kaufman, 1983).

Changes in occupations and the demands for new and different skill, and knowledge profiles necessary to succeed in these occupations, do not evolve in a vacuum. They are the outgrowths of societal, technological, and scientific changes which can rarely be foreseen and only occasionally predicted. Regardless of the reason for change, the result is a limited labour market for poorly

prepared youth or adult workers. The crisis for organizations is how to deal with the diminishing pool of qualified workers to meet the organization's planned economic or technological changes.

One response to this situation has been to look to counselors for assistance in employing strategies which economists refer to as "competitive and sponsored mobility" (Herr & Long, 1983; Wrenn, 1984).

Competitive mobility is a situation where the organization accepts stated job qualifications of an applicant or existing worker. This may include acceptance of foreign or non-traditional certification to meet job requirements. The task is to assist workers to develop skills and make cultural or social adjustments to qualify them for existing or new and emerging jobs.

Sponsored mobility is a situation where the organization modifies its job qualifications or requirements to accommodate existing skills of applicants or existing workers in order to reduce discrimination against any particular worker or worker group.

Both of these scenarios have complex HRD economic-based decisions which underlie their implementation. Organizations have limited economic options when faced with the dilemma of developing new knowledge and skill bases within their work forces in order to remain competitive or to achieve goals. The first option is to fire the elements of the existing work force that lack the required knowledge and skill base to carry out new tasks and to hire new workers who possess the desired skills and knowledge. The second option is to retain and retrain the existing work group. The third option is to foresee the economic, organizational, legal, political, or social implications of either of the first two options and to quit the marketplace or flee to another environment that has more acceptable alternatives to these issues. One outcome of exercising this latter option has been a shift of industrially skilled and semi-skilled, labour-intensive production from economically and industrially advanced Western nations to less

developed nations (Geroy, 1988). To support the second option and discourage selection of the third option, members of the Canadian work force must make value adjustments regarding their desires and abilities to learn new and more complex skills.

PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT TO WORK

In that most of us seek a "bit more", the economic self is rarely completely satisfied. Likewise, the social being in each of us seeks a level of self and public identification and social interaction which insures self-efficacy and personal dignity. An individual experiencing conflict, abuse, and domination by others in the work place will have a reduced sense of social well-being and belongingness and experience reduced job performance (Herr & Long, 1983). These elements, plus factors such as heritage, family background and circumstances, educational level, and social and ethnic class provide a complete individual or worker group profile. When organizations plan for change, this profile is investigated to determine what potential worker social adjustments need to be accommodated (Burke, 1982).

For example, most individuals residing in metropolitan areas identify with some smaller suburb or community around the central city. Each suburban unit is likely to develop around some socioeconomic culture of its own and to draw people from a given set of ethnic or cultural types and/or levels. Yet, it is not uncommon for individuals to make regular commutes to work, recreate, and/or participate in commerce outside this defined community. As young workers or newly relocated workers experience encounters with the other parts of the urban environment, they may experience a variety of threats, insecurities, and other emotional reactions. Among other needs, organizations are seeking assistance from counselors to develop an awareness of the impact of a particular community's culture upon its members. They are particularly interested in how the community's cultural values

shape individual worker behaviors when they encounter changes in the organization.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Guidance in schools has been an integral part of the interest that society shows in assisting young men and women in the decisions they must make as they mature and prepare for the world of work. Educational institutions in all societies are concerned with the transmission of cultural heritages and with the socialization of younger and newer members of society (Boy & Peni, 1968). In the proposed expanded role for professional counselors, whether educational institutions, government, or business and/or industry based, they will continue to provide individuals with an increased understanding of the educational and vocational information essential to make wise choices. In addition, the counselor will continue to play an important role in contributing to an individual's own self-understanding and growth. However, within the context of a business or industrial organization, the counselor's role will be expanded to facilitate behavioral change through worker and worker group's efforts which will contribute to the goals of the organization (Burke, 1982). These changes may include becoming less biased, less self-deceptive, and more skilled and knowledgeable. It is anticipated this process will sharpen the individual's sense of personal reality and broaden his/her understanding of the present and future work environment (Wrenn, 1966). Often these efforts will be conducted in an environment where many adults find it difficult to accept or facilitate rapid change. Due to social, cultural, and/or job experiences they may be hard pressed to understand and adjust to conditions which entry level younger workers and youth regard with unconcern (Herr, 1988).

The present role of counselors is a complex one. The emerging roles for counselors in a rapidly changing economic and social environment will be correspondingly more complex. It will not be enough to understand individuals in isolation per se. Rather, in

an environment of change, the counseling professional must also understand and deal with developing and emerging young workers, their adult counterparts, and workers infusing into our social and economic environment from other and diverse cultures.

To counsel individuals about the realistic interaction between possessed knowledge, personal characteristics, career options, training and education opportunities, and employer needs within the expanded environment described in this paper suggests a need for additional competencies. Herr (1984) suggests that there are four principle competing areas which require mastery in order to meet counselors' evolving responsibilities to organizations and individuals or worker groups as clients. Included in these areas are several specific areas of skill and knowledge. These are presented in Figure 1.

Personnel & Management	Vocational Assessment & Evaluation
Personnel & Administration	Principles of Rehabilitation
Organizational Behavior	Vocational Diagnosis
Industrial Psychology	Assessment of Physical Capacities
Human Resource Development	Human Factors Engineering
World of Work	Marketing Human Resources
Sociology of Occupations	Job Placement & Development
Labour Market Information	Job Search Techniques
Job & Labour Force Analysis	Marketing Management
Demographic Techniques	Job Modification & Redesign

Figure 1. Compentency Areas and Associated Skill and Knowledge Areas

How do business leaders see counseling professionals' roles and responsibilities in organizations? While it may not be possible to place counselors into water-tight categories, it may

be accurate to say that counselors will continue to have a recognizable orientation to their work. How specialized the counseler's role will become in an organization's and economic planner's HRD efforts may be determined by a whole variety of factors: the types of organization they serve, the demographics of the clients, and their position in the organization (Bennet, 1988).

Some of the orientations for these counselor roles may include:

1. analyzing changing technology skills and knowledge needs to guide individuals to education, training, and skill development opportunities which will meet real manpower needs;
2. identifying realistic opportunities for the displaced and disadvantaged to reduce surplus manpower levels based on forecasted changes in the economy;
3. identifying emerging skill/knowledge issues related to organizational, occupational, and economic changes;
4. working with clients to develop and improve interpersonal communications and other intra-group working skills; and
5. providing direction for changes in current curriculum in educational institutions, government and social service training and retraining programmemes.

Pfeiffer & Goodstein (1984) suggest that there may be five key potential HRD counselor related roles which emerge from this orientation scheme.

1. The counselor: primarily concerned with actual one-on-one or group facilitation counseling activity - the direct delivery person.
2. The organization development specialist: primarily concerned with the design of activities to meet identified client needs and development of programmemes to respond to issues calling for long- or short-term counseling interventions.

3. The transfer agent: primarily concerned with the analysis of issues, recommending solutions or plans of action, and functioning as a liaison between local site programmemes and larger funding or governing agencies.
4. The training and development specialist: primarily involved in the implementation and intervention of programmemes into organizations, socio-economic groups or settings - individuals who act as change agents and direct and advise on the "putting on line" of desired HRD programmemes.
5. The manager: primarily concerned with the policy development and controlling activity functions which are delivery vehicles for HRD programmes.

SUMMARY

This paper has explored several topics associated with a proposed emerging role for counselors in individual and national economic development. From this exploration, we can draw several inferences.

First, we see that professional organizations in the world of work view counselors as human resource development (HRD) professionals with historic and defined roles.

Second, the issue of new and emerging roles for counselors is the result of the need for a shift from counseling only for vocational placement to a concern for the intangibles resulting from the interaction between organizational change and evolving worker needs. Herr (1984) suggests that professional issues associated with this change will be focused around three aspects of the economic and occupational environments with which counselors will interact and in which our clients will be emersed.

These environmental aspects include:

1. employment and unemployment and the characteristics of affected groups;

2. mechanization of work and the adaptation of technology to both content and to the characteristics of the work place; and
3. changes in the understanding of work behavior and interventions in it.

Third, two major departures in education and counseling need to occur to facilitate economic development. First, curriculum and counseling need to be distributed over a wider temporal span which extends into post-formal school arenas and later lifetime periods of individuals. Second, the counseling effort should embrace not only the specific client needs, but be broad enough to consider organizational, societal, and economic realities. Especially important will be the need for counselors, whether in private enterprise or public institutions, to deal with all elements potentially influencing the client's situation (Bennet, 1988; Burke, 1982). This includes organizational and individual social and cultural issues as well as job skills and knowledge.

Fourth, counselors formally involved in economic development strategies may assume some combination of the five roles discussed previously.

Finally, the counselor will need to acquire additional knowledge and skills to support these new and more complex roles. Herr has suggested four broad competency areas with several attendant specific skill and knowledge areas.

As we assume newly defined roles in economic development, our sphere of clients and knowledge enlarges to include the organizational and institutional members of our society and their planning and decision making components. Associated with this expanded sphere of effort and clients are new and exciting challenges. These are challenges which, when met, will contribute in significant ways to individual and national economic development.

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